Extraction –the Canadian exhibition at the 2016 Venice Biennale– confronts us with the last eight centuries of natural resources exploitation. Represented as a ‘counter-monument’ which, by inviting the visitors to look down at the soil left them in a position of reverence to the crown, this research and its manifesto remind us that–although in a less obvious or evident way–the exploitation of resources is also a pattern of land development.

KEYWORDS · exploitation, resources, soil, Canada, Venice Biennale
At 1.1 billion, the geological map of the world reveals magnitudes of operation from the largest extraction nation on the planet whose foreign policy emerges from legacies as colony, confederation, and now, global resource empire. Home to over 75% of the planet’s prospecting and mining companies thanks to Toronto’s Stock Exchange, more than 10,000 mining projects shape Canada’s vast underground image of global mineral wealth. If the ideology of extraction defined Canada for eight centuries since the Magna Carta, then ecologies of exchange will revolutionize the future. Reporting from the edge of empire, the quintessential instrument of exploration—a survey stake—is driven into the heart of empire, under the Pines and Planes of the Giardini in Venice, at the junction of the UK, France, and Canada Pavilions to declare...
1. On displacement: All development, like all forms of colonization, displaces. If displacement follows extractive development, then more just, fiscally fair, live, and equitably negotiated forms of organization are needed to avoid further dispossession.

2. On borders: All States encircle and enclose. If their purpose is to control and contain, then their territorial techniques and technologies produce boundaries that exclude as much as they connect. Since lines separate, boundary zones need to be created for the indivisible, indigenous systems lying in between land, life, and language.

3. On frontiers: Remoteness—like wilderness—is an imperial myth and a colonial lie. There is no frontier, no terra nullius, there never was. Every single square kilometer of Canada, no matter how apparently remote, has live boundaries, edges, peripheries, thresholds, and lived histories. Today, there are only frontlines. Doctrines of (mineral) discovery latent in the ideologies of remote (resource) exploration are coming to an abrupt end on new fronts of action and resistance.

4. On paper: Property in Canada is built on the back of land stolen from First Nations. Land has been subdivided by a colonial bureaucracy leading to territorial agreements and retroactive treaties: from the Charter of the Hudson Bay Company in 1670 to the Confederation of 1867 to the 11 Post-Confederation Treaties between 1871 and 1921. Future legal revisions to colonial laws and imperial maps lie in the medium, media, and means in which they were originally drafted.

5. On the crown: If the assumed and unquestioned power of the Crown lies in the separation of surface rights above and mineral rights below, then the supremacy of the paper world of extraction—where power lies in between the lines of laws and leases—needs to be surgically dissected. The system of royalties for the
95% of land in Canada controlled by the Crown needs to be radically redesigned to reinforce the integral rights and livelihoods of First Nations and Métis populations that are based on and in land.

6. **ON ORAL COMMUNICATION:** As a vehicle, the voice of communication can control and also liberate. If oral knowledge transcends generations through an inheritance of lived histories and transfer of verbal techniques, the spoken word not only communicates history but, as a forensic form of evidence, it also preserves and produces previously excluded histories. Voice not only challenges the written foundations of Victorian jurisprudence: it challenges the legal origins of the Magna Carta Libertatum of the 12th century altogether.

7. **ON THE PLANNING PARADOX:** Resistance to industrialization is hard; negotiation is complicated. Institutional infiltration and systemic unplanning are tenuous and often contradictory proposals but eventually they will become necessary strategies. Like a Trojan horse, the role of the counter-planner is to identify and fuel the emergence of counter-economies within new political ecologies.

8. **ON PRODUCTION:** If it's not grown or harvested, it will apparently be mined. Thanks to new markets and forms of exchange, there is a huge potential in designing means of coproduction where sites of extraction are increasingly closer to the spaces of consumption. If a resource is not left in the ground, refine it where you mine it. Concentrated cities will necessarily have to deconcentrate and open up new lands.

9. **ON CONSUMPTION:** Resource dependency is not waning. If two-thirds of the world are currently under development, then new patterns of resource cultivation and distribution will be required for the 21st and 22nd centuries.

10. **ON ENERGY:** To rethink extraction is to rethink energy. If we are to rethink energy, we must conquer technologies of combustion and destroy the British order
of the combustion engine to render fossil fuels obsolete and propose alternative carbon flows and live forms of energy. The power of human energy is the greatest and most precious renewable resource on the planet.

11. ON WORK: Labor, like knowledge, is a precious commodity and a rare resource. Unlike numbers or units, cross-generational labor –however mobile it may seem– is not easily moved nor is it easily pushed around, as if people were data, digits, or statistics. Economies of labor can only be achieved by unlocking the energy of its workforce whose intelligence is rooted in land itself.

12. ON MINING: Mega-mining creates micro-mining. Distributed forms of extraction can result in the uneven stratification of wealth. Friction and confrontation often occur in the self-regulation of an industry that benefits from the under-estimation of environmental and security risks. Greater levels of economic exchange and cultural interaction across multiple generations can eventually eliminate the damaging practices of high-grading and recalibrate the disparities of over-exploitation.

13. ON GEOGRAPHY: Mines radically redefine regions far beyond the limits of their boundaries. They draw new borders, and inscribe new geographies. There is no mining without water or waste. Obscured by the quintessential image of dry open pit, every mine is located inside a watershed drainage area, above an aquifer, and upstream from a larger water body: a lake, lagoon, river, bay, delta, gulf, or ocean. If the risks of effluents and emissions cannot be eliminated, than that resource is not a resource, it’s a liability.

14. ON EXCHANGE: Resource industry is not an industry, it is a pattern of urbanization. In lieu of extraction and its deleterious effects, cities are the gold mines of the future. Exchange will soon usurp and supplant extraction where new, unborn cultures can begin to decolonize industrialized territories. To avoid the violence that usually comes with decolonization, those new spaces of exchange need to be opened and imagined to extinguish the hegemony of the Victorian extractive sector and beyond the imperial staple-based economy.
15. **ON TERRITORY:** Beyond the relatively small and concentrated footprints of cities, a new resource culture is emerging across the more than 80% of lands throughout the world beyond cities and where almost 1.5 billion indigenous people live or belong to. This cultural resurgence marks a regional turning point in transnational politics and political geographies with the gradual weakening of the State and imminent dissolution of the hegemony of the Crown.

16. **ON FREEDOM:** Territorial claims and ecological politics of pre-State populations – whose reclamation of surface and subsurface rights, as well as the live engagement of the ‘non-anthropogenic’ will form the basis and bones for the independence of individual nations – will eventually lead to the birth of new constituencies and reclaimed freedoms. Moving towards the 22nd century, it is the freedom that this living landscape and dynamic ground provides that we will all eventually have to fight for, in this lifetime.

17. **ON SOVEREIGNTY:** Since boundary delineation has inflicted unspoken oppression on indigenous cultures that existed long before the Crown, lands must be remapped, resourced, resurveyed, represented, reinscribed, reclaimed, and reinstituted to the First Nations. Canada’s Constitution needs to be deconstituted in order to be reconstituted. Unsettling lands and resources of the State, the Crown will eventually have to surrender.
Exposing frictions between map and territory, this counter-monument marks a golden moment to question the Crown's natural power on the surface of State towards Canada’s 150th Year of Confederation in 2017.

Across 800 years unfolds 800 images from 800 contributors in 800 seconds tracing entanglements of empire: between paper worlds of lands to leases, material worlds of mines to minerals, and living worlds from tribes to treaties. By miniaturizing these spatial geopolitics at 1:1, a powerful intervention on the ground magnifies realities of land, law and life. Retroactively, a handheld manifesto on territorial ecologies reimagines new grounds from weak states for the 22nd century. 

ARQ

Título de la exposición / Title of the Exhibition
Extraction

Comisionado por / Commissioner
Art Gallery of Alberta / Catherine Crowston

Curador / Curator
opsys / Pierre Bélanger

Organizadores y colaboradores / Organizers & Collaborators
opsys, Christopher Alton, Zannah Matson; Ecological Design Lab, Nina-Marie Lister; RVTB, Geoff Thun, Kathy Velikov, Colin Ripley; Hume Atelier, Kevin Hume, Genevieve Ennis Hume; Me&B Studio, Troels Bruun, Luca Delisle; Blackwell Studio, Kelsey Blackwell; Steven Beites; Alessandra Lai; Massimo Benedetti; Michael Awad; Sam Gillis; Jacob Moginot; Olga Semenovych; Jane Zhang; Tiffany Dang; Hamed Bukhamseen

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1 Extraction, cubierta manifiesto / cover manifesto. Fuente / Source: Extraction, Canada Exhibition at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2016. Curador / Curator: opsyps / Pierre Bélanger
3 «Poseemos el imperio más vasto que haya habido» según el Imperio Británico del s. xix / “We Hold a Vaster Empire Than Has Been” according to the 19th c. British Empire. Fuente / Source: Estampilla navideña de Canadá #85 / Canada Christmas Stamp #85. Canada Post Archive (1898)
4 Imperio de extracción: 9.000 proyectos mineros en el mundo / Extraction Empire: 9,000 Mining Projects Worldwide. Fuente / Source: ©2016 opsyps / Chris Alton
6 Camión de arrastre / Hauling truck. Mercedes-Benz Actros Caterpillar 797F. Fuente / Source: ©2014 Karanja Earl Simmons
9 Super mina de oro Kalgoorlie / Kalgoorlie Gold Super Pit. Australia. Fotograma / Film Still. Fuente / Source: ©2016 opsyps / Zannah Matson
11 Aplicación de prueba, vista hacia el pabellón inglés / Test application, view towards English Pavilion. Fuente / Source: Extraction, Canada Exhibition at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2016. Curador / Curator: opsyps / Pierre Bélanger
Degree in Landscape Architecture (BLA), University of Toronto School of Architecture, Canada. Master in Landscape Architecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design, USA. PhD, Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Co-Director of the MDES Program, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, his research focuses on the convergence of ecology, infrastructure and power in the interrelated fields of design, engineering, and urbanism. As author and editor, has contributed to a number of journals including Pamphlet Architecture, Harvard Design Magazine, Ecological Urbanism, Landscape Journal, among others. Curator and Editor of EXTRACTION, Canada’s National Pavilion for the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale. Among his forthcoming books are Ecologies of Power (MIT Press, 2016) and Landscape as Infrastructure: A Base Primer (Taylor & Francis, 2016).